

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1.-23. (canceled)

24. (Previously presented) An oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence with at least 94% identity to SEQ ID NO:13.

25. (Previously presented) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 24, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 05.

26. (Previously presented) An oligopeptide or polypeptide, comprising an amino acid sequence in which from 0 to 4 amino acids are substituted, deleted or inserted as compared with SEQ ID NO:13.

27. (Previously presented) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 26, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 05.

28. (Currently amended) An oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising at least 5 consecutive amino acids from SEQ ID NO:12, and comprising at least one of the amino acid positions ~~72~~ 73, 78, 112, 122, and 139 of SEQ ID NO:12.

29. (Previously presented) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 28, comprising an amino acid sequence chosen from SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, and SEQ ID NO:22.

30. (Previously presented) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 28, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 05.

31. (Currently amended) A oligopeptide or polypeptide, comprising a length of at least 5 amino acids, and comprising at least one of the amino acid positions ~~115, 120, 154, 164, and 181~~ 73, 78, 112, 122, and 139 of SEQ ID NO:12, wherein position ~~115~~ 73 is arginine, position ~~120~~ 78 is glutamine, position ~~154~~ 112 is leucine, position ~~164~~ 122 is valine, and position ~~181~~ 139 is arginine.

32. (Previously presented) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 31, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 05.

33. (Currently amended) A composition comprising at least one immunogenic molecule comprising one or more oligopeptides or polypeptides as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31, and optionally further comprising one or more ~~H8V~~ HBV immunogens.

34. (Previously presented) A method of preparing the oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31, which comprises culturing a cell and expressing the oligopeptide or polypeptide in said cell.

35. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 34, wherein the oligopeptide or polypeptide is isolated from the cells and separated from other oligopeptides or polypeptides.

36. (Previously presented) An antibody which binds to the oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31.

37. (Previously presented) The antibody as claimed in claim 36, which binds to an oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence with at least 94% identity to SEQ ID NO:13 with higher affinity than to HBs antigens belonging to genotype A, subtype adw, of hepatitis B virus.

38. (Previously presented) The antibody as claimed in claim 36, which does not bind to HBs antigens belonging to genotype A, subtype adw, of hepatitis B virus.

39. (Previously presented) An antiidiotypic antibody which represents an amino acid sequence as defined in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31.

40. (Currently amended) A kit for detecting hepatitis B viruses, comprising at least one of (i) an oligopeptide or polypeptide as Claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31; (ii) an oligonucleotide or polynucleotide encoding said oligopeptide or polypeptide; and (iii) an antibody which recognizes said oligopeptide or polypeptide; and.

41. (Previously presented) A method for detecting a hepatitis B antigen, comprising (a) incubating a sample with the antibody of claim 36 under conditions which allow the formation of antigen-antibody complexes; and (b) detecting antigen-antibody complexes.

42. (Previously presented) A method of identifying antibodies directed against a hepatitis B antigen, comprising (a) incubating a sample with an oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31, under conditions which allow the formation of antigen-antibody complexes; and (b) detecting antibody-antigen complexes comprising said oligopeptide or polypeptide.